

REMARKS

Examiner Wong is thanked for the courtesies extended during several interviews which took place on September 10 and September 17. During these interviews, the Examiner indicated that independent claim 1 was not clear and provided many helpful suggestions as to how the claim could be improved. This supplemental amendment is being made to help place the claims in better condition for allowance.

During the interview several amendments to claim 1 were discussed. As explained to the Examiner, the claim describes a scenario where a protection cycle on a communication network has both working and protection paths. When there is a failure on the working path, the traffic affected by the failure will be placed onto the protection paths to be restored on the network. If time slot interchange is being used on the working path and on the protection path, the nodes will not know which timeslot is being used to carry which flow of traffic. Claim 1 addresses how nodes can locate the traffic on the protection path by enabling the nodes to determine which timeslots on protection will be used to carry particular flows of working traffic.

In claim 1 the preamble sets the stage, by reciting that the method is focused on determining timeslot allocations on the protection path for flows of traffic that are being carried on the working path upon occurrence of failure on the working path. The preamble further explains that the working path and protection path extend through a common set of nodes to implement a protection cycle on the communication network. Example protection cycles include SONET rings and logical cycles through mesh networks, as explained in dependent claims 12 and 16 respectively.

The method steps recited in claim 1 explain how each of the nodes is able to determine which timeslots are being used to carry particular flows of working traffic at that node. Specifically, the first step recites that connection information associated with the traffic flows is distributed to all nodes on the protection path before the failure on the working path.

Then, if there is a failure on the working path, each node will individually determine which traffic flows on the working path are affected by the failure on the working path. Note in this regard that the working path may carry flows of traffic that are not affected by the failure. For example, if the network extends from node 1→2→3→4, and there is a link break between nodes 3 and 4, working flows of traffic that go from 1→2 and 1→3 are not likely to be affected by the link failure between nodes 3 and 4. Accordingly, each node determines which flows of

traffic are affected by the failure on the working path, since only these flows will need to be placed on the protection path to be restored.

In addition, this step of the method recites that each node on the protection path will determine which timeslot allocations on the protection path will be used to carry particular flows of working traffic “at that node”. This phrase was deliberately inserted into the claim to clarify that the time slot allocation for a particular flow of working traffic need not be the same at each node on the protection path. Rather, each node will individually determine where to locate flows of traffic “at that node”. Accordingly, different flows of working traffic may be located in different timeslots at different nodes while being carried on the protection path.

Finally, this step recites that each node determines the timeslot allocations for the affected working flows based on the connection information. Note, in this regard, that the connection information was distributed as discussed above and relates to the flows of traffic being carried by the working path. Thus, the nodes use the connection information about the working flows not only to determine which flows on the working path are affected by the failure, but also to determine which timeslots on protection will be used to carry the particular affected working flows.

New claim 21 has been submitted herein to provide the Examiner with an example of how the claim may be drafted without including as much detail in the preamble. This claim recites these same general steps, however, and thus is believed also to patentably distinguish over the references cited by the Examiner in the previous Office Action. Since applicants explained the differences between this application and the cited prior art in the previous response, additional comments on the prior art are not believed warranted. The remarks set forth in the previous response are thus hereby incorporated herein by reference.

Conclusion

In view of foregoing claim amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance and an action to this effect is respectfully requested. If there are any questions or concerns regarding the amendments or these remarks, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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No fees are believed due in connection with this filing. If any fees are due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of the fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 141315 (Ref: 16220ROUS01U).

Respectfully Submitted

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